

# Handling

## What is Handling?

Handling is the skill and art of presentation of a dog that is taken into the show ring for the judge's assessment. A person who takes a dog into a show ring is called a Handler. Basic moves have been designed to test the handler in the show ring, these moves are called Patterns. Classes for Handling are decided by your age. The age groups are usually 6-11 years, 12-16 years and 17-24 years.

## Beforehand

The best way to learn the art of Handling is to go to a breed dog show and watch the exhibitors, as most dog shows have some form of Handling classes scheduled. Dog shows are held all over the country, advertisements for these events appear in weekly newspapers, Our Dogs and Dog World.

## A Suitable Dog

If you are a newcomer to handling and you do not own a dog, the choice of dog is yours. First, go to some shows and watch the different breeds in the show rings to help you decide which breed interests you the most. You can use anyone's dog in the handling ring; you do not need to own the dog. You will need to ask the owner of the dog for permission and ask for help to arrange for the dog to be entered in the Handling classes. If you already own a dog and it is trained for the show ring you are well on the way to entering your first class, but still go and observe at shows.

## Join a Club

Join your local training class, but make sure that it is not just for Obedience. You need Ringcraft, and some training classes will also teach Handling as a separate discipline. If you are unable



to find a local training club contact the Kennel Club or your YKC Handling Co-ordinator. Your training club may also hold match nights. These are very useful to you as all the things that you are practising at home and at training can be brought together in a small friendly competition.

## Basic Training

Everything in the Handling ring has to be very smart, straight lines, sharp corners and neat presentations. When you are at home mark a show ring out on the grass, put a chair in the position you think the judge would stand, and then practice. You do not need a dog at this point, just lots of concentration. Hold the lead as if you have a dog and then practice the moves that you want to perfect.

Before you start to move look in the direction that you are moving and walk straight to that point. Turn the corner sharply and never let your body

come between your dog and the judge. To make sure that this happens you will have to change sides with your dog, sometimes the dog will be on the right and at other times on the left. These moves must be completed smoothly without distraction to the dog or judge.

When you have completed your pattern, your presentation of the dog should be made to the judge to assess the dog without having to move. This usually means you need to present ►



# Beginner's Guide

your dog a short distance away from where the judge is standing, otherwise the judge will have to move to see the whole view of your dog. A rough guide is approximately the height of the judge away.

## At the show

Exercise your dog before the show. Arrive early and find out which ring you are going to be judged in, then find a space for yourself and your dog near to the ring. When you think that your class is nearly ready for the ring, exercise and groom your dog. Finally get yourself ready so that you are waiting when your class is called.

## In the ring

Before you can enter any Handling class you will need to learn what is expected from you in the show ring. The moves you will be asked to do are called Patterns and the basic patterns are a triangle, straight up the down, the T and the L.

## Around the Ring

This is used when you first enter the ring. At this time you are making your first impression on the judge. You will be expected to move around the ring and stand in line with other handlers ready to present your dog to the judge when requested.

## The Triangle

Most judges request this as the exhibit can be seen moving away, in profile and forward movement.

## The T and L

These are patterns that are used in a small ring or to test the skill of the

handlers in strong competition. This is when the dog is to be moved around the ring in the show of a T or L.

## Checklist for your first show

- Clean your dogs teeth
- Cut or file your dogs nails
- Make sure that your dog is groomed and clean
- Leave for the show in plenty of time

### You will need

- Showing Clothes
- Ring clip for your ring number
- Hairbrush or Comb
- Shoes to show in
- Schedule
- Food and Drink
- A warm coat or sun hat and sun cream depending on season

### Your dog will need

- Showing Lead
- Water and Water Bowl
- Towel
- Dog Blanket
- Cage (if used)
- Benching Chain
- Collar with ID tag
- Poo Bags



## Straight up and Down

This shows the dog moving away from, and back to the judge. If these patterns are completed correctly the judge should not have to move.

## Types of show

### Limited

Entry is limited to members of the show society or to exhibitors resident within specified areas.

### Open

Open to all exhibitors.

### Championship

Open to all exhibitors and at which Kennel Club Challenge Certificates are offered.

### Companion Dog Club Classes

At which registered and unregistered dogs are eligible to enter.

## Recommended Reading

Junior Handling the White Way by Marina White.

[www.juniorhandling.co.uk](http://www.juniorhandling.co.uk)

## Further information

For further information please contact the YKC office at [ykc@the-kennel-club.org.uk](mailto:ykc@the-kennel-club.org.uk) or visit the Kennel Club website [www.the-kennel-club.org.uk](http://www.the-kennel-club.org.uk)

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